

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2728

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 HELSINKI 1527

FOR PM AND EUR ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, FI  
SUBJ: NORTHERN FLANK PLAN

REF: (A) STATE 102676, (B) HELSINKI 125, (C) HELSINKI 460,  
(D) 77 HELSINKI 3084.

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE COMMENTS ON THE EXCELLENT PM  
DRAFT STUDY ON THE NATO NORTHERN FLANK. PARAGRAPHS 2 -  
10 PRESENT OUR GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. PARAS 11 - 20  
REFER TO SPECIFIC POINTS. END SUMMARY.

2. WE FOUND EXTREMELY INTERESTING--AND ARE IN BASIC  
AGREEMENT WITH--THE ANALYSES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
PRESENTED IN THE PM DRAFT STUDY. WE PARTICULARLY  
CONCUR IN THE PAPER'S ESTIMATE OF SOVIET POLICIES AND  
AMBITIONS IN THE NORDIC AREA AND WITH THE GENERAL DESCRIP-  
TION OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES' SECURITY PERCEPTIONS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO FINLAND SPECIFICALLY, WE REALIZE IT  
IS NOT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PM PAPER TO DIG DEEPLY INTO  
THE HIGHLY COMPLEX FINNISH/SOVIET RELATIONSHIP;  
WHILE WE HAVE NO MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH THE DRAFT STUDY'S  
TREATMENT OF THIS MATTER, WE DO WISH TO REMIND  
THAT EFFORTS TO SYNOPSISIZE THE FINNISH/SOVIET

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RELATIONSHIP RUN A HIGH RISK OF OVERSIMPLIFICATION  
AND LOSS OF NUANCE. REFERENCES C AND D (REF D:  
77 HELSINKI 3084) PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILED  
ANALYSIS OF THE FINNISH/SOVIET RELATIONSHIP AND  
ITS RELEVANCE TO NORTHERN EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES.

4. AT THE RISK OURSELVES OF OVERSIMPLIFICATION,

FINLAND'S POLICY IN THE NORDIC AREA IS AIMED AT AVOIDING PRECISELY THE KINDS OF SCENARIOS EXPLORED IN THE PM PAPER. IN OTHER WORDS A SOVIET ATTACK THROUGH FINLAND ON NORWAY OR EVEN A SOVIET DEMAND TO FINLAND FOR MILITARY CONSULTATIONS UNDER THE 1948 TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE (FMCA) WOULD SIGNIFY THE FAILURE OF FINLAND'S POST WORLD WAR II SECURITY POLICY. IN SUCH A SITUATION FINLAND MIGHT ABANDON AS FUTILE ITS EFFORTS TO ASSURE SOVIET GOOD WILL THROUGH ITS "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE USSR, LEADING TO UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES.

5. EACH OF THE SCENARIOS HYPOTHESIZED IN THE PM STUDY WOULD CONSTITUTE SUCH A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE CURRENT NORTHERN EUROPEAN SECURITY SITUATION THAT THE FINNISH REACTION WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ANTICIPATE, ALTHOUGH DOUBTLESS THE FINNS HAVE CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EACH SITUATION. THE PM PAPER EXPLORES TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS THAT WOULD DIRECTLY INVOLVE FINLAND: A SOVIET ATTACK THROUGH FINLAND ON NORWAY AS PART OF A NATO/WARSAW PACT CONFLICT OR A MORE LIMITED SOVIET ATTACK THROUGH FINLAND ON NORWAY, PRESUMABLY NOT AS PART OF A MORE GENERALIZED NATO/WARSAW PACT CONFLICT. THE PM PAPER ADDRESSES ONLY PARTIALLY AND INDIRECTLY A THIRD POSSIBLE SCENARIO: A SOVIET MOVE TO OCCUPY MILITARILY ALL OF FINLAND,

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EITHER IN THE CONTEXT OF A GENERALIZED CONFLICT OR IN A MORE LIMITED CONFLICT SITUATION.

6. PERHAPS THE PM PAPER DOES NOT FOCUS ON THE THIRD SCENARIO BECAUSE IT SEEMS LESS LIKELY THAN THE OTHER TWO OR BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BY ITSELF INVOLVE NATO. HOWEVER, THIS THIRD SCENARIO IS WORTH MENTION IF ONLY TO PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE POSSIBLE FINNISH REACTIONS TO A SOVIET MOVE INTO NORWAY THROUGH NORTHERN FINLAND. IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT UNDER THE THIRD SCENARIO THE FINNS WOULD PROBABLY RESIST FIERCELY WITH ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL, INCLUDING GUERRILLA WARFARE AND, FINALLY, Sullen CIVILIAN RESISTANCE. AS THE DRAFT STUDY NOTES, NATO IS NOT IN A POSITION TO DEFEND OR ASSIST FINLAND AGAINST SOVIET ATTACK, AND FINNISH FORCES ALONE PROBABLY COULD NOT ULTIMATELY PREVENT SOVIET OCCUPATION. HOWEVER THE COST TO THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY BE HIGH, RAISING, AS INTENDED, THE ISSUE AS TO WHETHER IT WOULD BE WORTH THE TROUBLE. IN THIS CONTEXT IT WOULD NOT BE COMPLETELY ACCURATE TO CONCLUDE THAT "SOVIET OCCUPATION OF FINLAND MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED POLITICAL-

LY, AND WOULD BE FEASIBLE MILITARILY" (PAGE 2  
OF THE DRAFT STUDY).

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 HELSINKI 1527

FOR PM AND EUR ONLY

7. FINNISH AUTHORITIES INSIST THAT THE DEFENSE OF  
FINLAND IS INDIVISIBLE AND HAVE, AS THE PM PAPER  
NOTES, STRENGTHENED FINNISH FORCES SOMEWHAT IN THE  
NORTH TO DRAMATIZE THE POINT. NEVERTHELESS, A  
HYPOTHESIZED SOVIET MOVE THROUGH FINNISH TERRITORY  
INTO NORWAY ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD BE SEEN BY THE  
FINNS AS A LESS DIRECT, FAR MORE AMBIGUOUS AND, HENCE,  
MORE DEBATABLE THREAT TO THE FUNDAMENTAL FINNISH NATION-  
AL INTEREST OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-PRESERVATION  
THAN WOULD BE A SOVIET ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY FINLAND. THE  
FINNISH REACTION TO A THREATENED OR ACTUAL SOVIET  
MILITARY MOVE ACROSS NORTHERN FINLAND WOULD  
PROBABLY VERY MUCH DEPEND UPON THE EXACT NATURE OF THE  
SITUATION AND THE PREVAILING "ATMOSPHERICS".

8. IF THE SOVIETS PRECEDED SUCH A MOVE WITH AN  
EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN ALLEGING A NATO  
THREAT IN NORTH SCANDINAVIA AND THEN  
REQUESTED MILITARY CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FINNS AND  
IF THE SOVIETS EMPHASIZED THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF  
THEIR PRESENCE IN NORTHERN FINLAND, THERE WOULD BE  
A REAL POSSIBILITY FINLAND WOULD DECIDE THAT IT WOULD  
BE IN ITS NATIONAL INTEREST NOT TO CHALLENGE A SOVIET  
ATTACK ON NORWAY ACROSS NORTHERN FINLAND. IN THE  
CONTEXT OF A GENERALIZED NATO/WARSAW PACT CONFLICT  
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THE FINNS MIGHT WELL CONSIDER THEMSELVES LEGALLY BOUND BY THE FCMA TREATY AS WELL AS FORCED BY PRACTICAL CIRCUMSTANCES NOT TO RESIST SUCH A SOVIET MOVE.

9. A MORE LIMITED SOVIET ATTACK THROUGH FINLAND ON NORWAY IN THE CONTEXT OF SOMETHING LESS THAN A NATO/WARSAW PACT CONFLICT WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE FINNS TO SWALLOW, ALTHOUGH AS THE PM STUDY POINTS OUT, EVEN IF THE FINNS WERE TO DECIDE TO RESIST IT IS NOT LIKELY THEY COULD THREATEN SOVIET CONTROL OVER THE NORTHERN PART OF FINLAND. MOREOVER, WHETHER OR NOT A SOVIET MOVE ACROSS NORTHERN FINLAND OCCURRED AS PART OF A GENERALIZED NATO/WARSAW PACT CONFLICT, THE SOVIETS PRESUMABLY WOULD ALSO WARN THAT ANY FINNISH RESISTANCE TO SUCH A MOVE WOULD RESULT IN A SOVIET DRIVE TO OCCUPY ALL OF FINLAND.

10. TO SUMMARIZE OUR GENERAL OBSERVATIONS, WE AGREE THAT IN SOME SCENARIOS THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND MIGHT BE DISPOSED TO GIVE THE SOVIETS A FREE HAND IN NORTHERN LAPLAND IF THIS APPEARED TO BE THE BEST WAY TO ASSURE THE SURVIVAL OF FINLAND AND THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FINLAND WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE FINNISH POPULATION LIVES. IN A GENERAL CONFLICT THREATENING FINLAND ITSELF, HOWEVER, FINNISH RESISTANCE WOULD PROBABLY BE HEAVY. EVEN IN THE FORMER SITUATION, I.E., FINNISH ACQUIESCENCE IN SOVIET MILITARY USE OF NORTHERN LAPLAND, THERE WOULD BE A HEAVY POLITICAL COST TO THE SOVIETS IN FINLAND IN THE FORM OF A RESURGENCE OF FINNISH MISTRUST, FEAR AND HATRED OF THE RUSSIANS NEGATING THE 34-YEAR POST-WAR EFFORT TO ESTABLISH  
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A MORE POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE.

11. WE REGARD PARTICULARLY WELL PUT THE ESTIMATE OF SOVIET AMBITIONS DISCUSSED IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF PAGE EIGHT AND THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF PAGE NINE OF THE DRAFT.

12. WE AGREE WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF NORDIC SECURITY PERCEPTIONS ON PAGES 18 THROUGH 20 AND BELIEVE THAT FINLAND SHARES THESE PERCEPTIONS. WE NOTE THAT THE KOSYGIN LECTURE TO THE NORDIC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY OCCURRED IN DECEMBER 1977 DURING FINLAND'S

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS (PAGE 20).

13. UNILATERAL SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION IN FINLAND IS NOT AUTHORIZED OR AUTOMATIC UNDER TERMS OF THE SOVIET/FINNISH TREATY (PAGE EIGHT) NOR HAVE THE SOVIETS HAD A BASE IN FINLAND SINCE 1956 (PAGE 23).

14. REGARDING THE MILITARY CAPABILITY OF THE USSR IN A MOVE AGAINST NORWAY THROUGH FINLAND, WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ESTIMATES OF SOVIET FORCES AND TRANSPORTATION CONTAINED IN THE STUDY. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS DO HAVE AIR DEFENSE INTERCEPTORS AVAILABLE IN THE VICINITY OF LENINGRAD. WE BELIEVE THAT THE STUDY UNDERESTIMATES THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IN NORTHERN FINLAND:

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ACCORDING TO OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, THE MAIN HIGHWAYS CITED IN THE STUDY ARE EXCELLENT AND SERVICEABLE. THE ONE ON FINLAND'S WESTERN BORDER, FOR EXAMPLE, IS LARGELY PAVED AND APPEARS ABLE TO CARRY HEAVY-DUTY TRAFFIC ALL THE WAY TO SKIBOTN. THE STUDY ALSO OMITTS REFERENCE TO THE ALL-WEATHER-SURFACE ROAD LEADING FROM ENONTEKIO, FINLAND, TOWARD ALTA, NORWAY. WE ARE PUZZLED BY REFERENCE TO ROADS BUILT WITH SOVIET ASSISTANCE (PAGE 12), WHICH ARE NOT LISTED IN ANY OF OUR DAO HOLDINGS BUT WHICH DID APPEAR IN THE DIA NORTHERN FLAK STUDY (DDI-2200-29-77) PUBLISHED A YEAR AGO.

15. SINCE AN ESTIMATE OF SOVIET CAPABILITIES IS THE BASIS FOR THE STUDY'S MAJOR ASSUMPTION THAT THE

SOVIETS DO NOT POSSESS OVERSHELMING MILITARY  
SUPERIORITY, THE EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT  
THE NORDIC INTERAGENCY GROUP MAY WISH TO FOCUS  
FURTHER ON THE QUESTIONS IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH.  
HOWEVER, WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH THE GENERAL  
CONCLUSION THAT SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND OBJECTIVES  
TAKEN TOGETHER DO NOT SEEM TO BE AS ALARMING AS THE  
NORDICS APPEAR TO BELIEVE.

16. CONCERNING POSSIBLE TRENDS THAT COULD DISTURB  
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THE PRESENT BALANCE IN THE NORDIC AREA (PAGE 63) WE  
CONSIDER THE SCENARIO POSTULATED FOLLOWING  
A CHANGE OF PRESIDENTS IN FINLAND QUITE UNLIKELY,  
SPECIFICALLY, SOVIET PRESSURE FOR "CO-MANNING" OF  
FINNISH LAPLAND OR A FINNISH EFFORT TO SEEK WESTERN  
SUPPORT.

17. WE AGREE WITH THE CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY (PAGE  
75) THAT US AND NATO POSTURES MUST BALANCE SUPPORT  
FOR THE CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES  
AND DETERRENTS OF ALL LEVELS OF SOVIET ATTACK AGAINST  
AVOIDING UNNECESSARY PROVOCATION OF THE SOVIETS.  
SOVIET SECURITY SENSITIVITIES OF THE TYPE MANIFESTED  
IN KOSYGIN'S DECEMBER TIRADE INDICATE THAT SOVIET  
REACTIONS CAN BE EXPECTED IF SOVIET LEADERS PERCEIVE  
A NATO STRENGTHENING IN NORTHERN EUROPE INCIDENTALLY,  
OSLO 778 REPORTED THAT NORWAY'S FREEZE ON FRG PARTICI-  
PATION IN EXERCISES IN NORWAY WAS DECIDED WELL  
BEFORE THE KOSYGIN BLAST). IN TURN FINLAND'S  
PERCEPTION OF SOVIET ATTITUDES IS ALSO IMPORTANT IN  
THE DELICATE NORDIC BALANCE. THE NATO OPTION FOR NORWAY  
OF EXERCISING AND FLYING FURTHER NORTH AND EAST (PAGE  
72) WOULD PROBABLY TRIGGER A FINNISH REACTION AND  
RUN THE RISK OF CONTRIBUTING TO TENSION INSTEAD OF  
SIMPLY REASSURING THE NORWEGIANS.

18. REGARDING OPTIONS CONCERNING FINLAND, OUR MILITARY  
OPTIONS ARE INDEED LIMITED. WE SUGGEST THAT THE  
APPROACH USED IN OUR 1978 POLICY ASSESSMENT (HELSINKI  
460) AND GOALS AND OBJECTIVE (HELSINKI 0125) MESSAGES  
IS APPROPRIATE: VISITS TO FINLAND BY US MILITARY  
OFFICERS, SHIP VISITS, EXCHANGE OF HIGH-RANKING  
OFFICERS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE IMET PROGRAM AT CURRENT  
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LEVELS. THESE PROGRAMS BEST SERVE US INTERESTS IN PROMOTING THE MAINTENANCE OF A CREDIBLE, WESTERN-ORIENTED MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WHILE RESPECTING FINNISH SENSITIVITIES.

19. THE POLITICAL OPTIONS IN FINLAND ARE SOMEWHAT BROADER AND ARE ALSO ADDRESSED IN OUR 1978 POLICY CYCLE MESSAGES.

20. FINALLY, PERHAPS THE DRAFT STUDY'S TITLE, RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON "DANGEROUS" AND "WEAK" MIGHT BE REVISED TO SOMETHING LIKE: "THE NORTHERN FLANK: NORDIC SECURITY AND NATO STRATEGY."  
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